1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

The men taking part at the *asaŭ ldiwana* had the whole body painted black and wore nothing but the loin cloth. They had to be ceremonially "pure" (*sunu*), a condition which was obtained by abstinence from women, salt, red peppers, and intoxicating liquor. Any one daring to come to the festival in a state of "uncleanness" was supposed to be killed by an awful giant, some sort of evil spirit, which came from some neighboring hill, and walked about the house with a quiver full of arrows. He was well treated and given plenty of *pupuh* (maize liquor), for every one was afraid of him.

At the *asaŭ ldiwana* trials of endurance took place in order to train the young men in supporting pain without the slightest groan. They also had the object of settling disputes which had been in suspense for some time. One man leans over and lets his opponent strike his back as hard as he can with the point of the elbow, until the latter is tired of punching. He is not supposed to utter the least groan nor show any other sign of pain. From time to time he merely says *yaŭ al yaŭ*, "I am a man," whereupon his adversary replies *yaŭ bik al yaŭ*, "I am also a man." When the latter is tired of punching the two men change places and he has to submit to the same rough treatment of his back by the other. Anyone giving up the struggle before his opponent is tired of striking is considered a coward; occasionally death has resulted from the effects of these terrible blows.

This method of fighting is unknown to the Miskito. The latter box a little, but it seems to be a point of honor with them to give and take blows in turn, and not to try how often they can strike each other as much as how long they can stand up to it.

PREPARATION OF AN EXPEDITION.—When the Miskito projected an armed expedition against the other Indian tribes or against the Spaniards they consulted one of their principal sukyas in order to hear if they would be successful. If the sukya's prediction, after having consulted the spirits, was unfavorable regarding the issue, the intended expedition was abandoned (M. W.: 307–308).

Both of these tribes were in the habit of painting the body hideously, perhaps with the object of scaring the enemy. Fair fighting was unknown. Attacks were carried out during the night, the enemy being taken by surprise.

INTERTRIBAL WARS.—The Miskito and Sumu were continually at war with each other as far back as the seventeenth century (Dampier: I, 9–10; M. W.: 300, 302, 305). These tribal wars continued throughout the eighteenth century and turned out to the advantage of the Miskito, who, having received European arms through the agency of the buccaneers from Jamaica, were able to conquer several subtribes of the Sumu from whom they collected tribute in the shape of canoes, deer skins, maize, cacao, rubber, etc.

1: Conzemius M-4, 5 (1921) 1932
SA15 Mosquito SA15

624 chiefs, called by the Miskito name *wita* or *wihta* (lit.: "head"), resided in the larger villages.

648 Now the government of the two republics, Honduras and Nicaragua, is represented by *comandantes*, who are invariably Ladinos. Indian *subcomandantes* are occasionally named in the larger areas, but their authority is practically insignificant. Some deference is also paid by the Indians to the elders of the settlements, and especially to the sukya. The officials despatched from Tegucigalpa or Managua are rarely of the better element, and have at times committed great abuses among the timid and peaceful aborigines. They are too frequently men of low morals who try to enrich themselves by imposing fines upon the Indians, which are put into their own pocket, or by compelling the natives to work for their personal benefit.

LAWS: CRIME AND ITS PUNISHMENT

●627 ADMINISTRATION OF JUSTICE.—In former days the punishment of criminals was intrusted to the individual wronged rather than to special officers of justice. If the injured person did not take any steps to revenge himself he was considered a coward.

177 Toward the middle of the eighteenth century, when British influence
692 spread to the "court" of the principal Miskito chief, special officers,
681 known by the name *kwatmas* (from the English "quartermaster") were intrusted with the execution of government orders and the administration of justice. Punishment was inflicted in the shape of fines, flogging, and death by hanging; prisons were unknown. On their periodical visits these officers used to whip all the young people whom they could seize, in order to cure them of their laziness and stinginess, apparently whether they were guilty of the charge or not. This was called "teaching the people" (M.: *upla smalkaya;* S.: *möih sumalnin, möih sumalnaka*) and had the object of inculcating principles of good conduct and morality. An account of such proceedings is given by Bell (b: 278–282).

685 THEFT.—A thief was compelled according to Indian law to restore twice the value of the stolen object.

847 INFANTICIDE.—This was apparently not considered a crime in former days under certain circumstances. (See Children: Their Birth and Education.)

683 BODILY INJURY.—For any bodily injury, whether done intentionally or not, a payment of "blood money" (M.: *tala mana;* T., P.: *a minit;* U.: *awas makalnak*) was collected.

682 MURDER.—A murderer had to follow his victim into death. If he should not do so voluntarily, the relations of the murdered man might kill him without risk of punishment; besides, in that case, his memory would be dishonored. The *lex talionis* was applied rigidly.

2: Kirchhoff E-4 (no date) 1948
SA15 Mosquito SA15

Among the *Mosquito* and *Sumo* a man who has been wronged is considered a coward if he does not avenge himself. If revenge fails, both the offended man and the perpetrator of the offense are supposed to commit suicide. A thief, when caught, must return double the amount stolen. A creditor may help himself to his debtor's property, or he may destroy the property of a third person, in which case the debtor must pay the damage (*Mosquito*). An adulterous wife is beaten and forced to reveal the name of her lover, who is fined. A murderer is killed, unless he commits suicide, and his memory is dishonored. There is, however, no dishonor in poisoning an enemy, the method employed for most murders.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

A man and woman may agree to marry, or, more rarely, the girl's parents may make marriage arrangements without her consent. Child betrothals are common. Cross-cousin marriage is frequent, but marriage between parallel-cousins and closer relations is forbidden. *Mosquito* and *Sumo* chiefs and shamans have several wives, and the *Paya* of Río Platano and Río Paulaya practice polygyny, as do the *Jicaque*.

Before marriage a man must pass through various ordeals, pay the bride's family an agreed sum, and prepare a field for his prospective wife. The wedding is a simple ceremony. The levirate and sororate are practiced, and the many possible exceptions to this rule are adjusted by payments. A man may abandon his wife if she is barren. Divorce is accomplished by means of payments to the families of offended parties. The woman always keeps the children. Among numerous relationship taboos are the important mother-in-law taboo and the prohibition on a man's speaking to his sister-in-law and to other close female relatives by marriage.

LIFE CYCLE

Childbirth.—The *Paya* and *Mosquito* build special confinement huts; the *Sumo* partition off a corner of the house. During parturition the mother is aided by another woman who cuts the cord with a piece of bamboo. The afterbirth and umbilical cord are buried. Among the *Paya* a midwife is regarded by parents and child as a blood relative. This belief is said to have originated among the *Mosquito* and diffused to the *Sumo* and *Paya*. The second of twins and deformed children are killed (*Mosquito* and *Sumo*). Some female children were killed at birth.

Sumo and *Mosquito* women bathe immediately after bearing a child, *Paya* women on the third day. *Sumo* women take a steam bath but use no special structure; in other tribes they bathe in the river. This bath ends a period of ritual impurity. *Mosquito* women, however, are considered impure for one or two weeks. Women also observe a special diet. The return of the mother to the house is celebrated with a ceremony.